

(Washington, DC) - Congressman Ciro D. Rodriguez (TX-23) has released the following statement regarding today's announcement of the resignation of Secretary Nicholson by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA):

"The resignation of Secretary Nicholson presents an important opportunity for the President to set aside partisan politics and appoint an effective and experienced leader to run the VA. The VA Secretary is responsible for the management of a nearly 95 billion dollar budget and the country's largest healthcare system, serving 70 million veterans and family members. Our veterans and wounded warriors have earned the best quality of care and it is a disgrace that there are over 600,000 backlogged benefit cases and unbearable wait times for our veterans seeking care.

"As a member of the House Veterans Affairs Committee, I have seen first-hand the challenges faced by the VA in the upcoming years, including record numbers of soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan who will require life-long assistance and care. That is why the House has passed the largest budget increase for the VA in 77 years.

"I hope the President will renew his commitment to our nation's heroes by appointing a new secretary who will respect our veterans by reducing the enormous case backlog, ensure fair access to quality physical and mental healthcare, and honor their sacrifice by investing in VA facilities and personnel across the country."

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